

Responses to Follow-up Questions of Senator Tom Coburn, M.D.
“Nomination of Thomas Perrelli to be Associate Attorney General of the United States”
United States Senate Committee on the Judiciary
February 10, 2009

1. Mr. Perrelli, you received a set of documents from me addressing pornography’s effects on adults and children. Please review those documents and respond to them accordingly.

At my hearing you asked me whether I personally believe that adult obscenity contributes to the sexual exploitation of children in any way, and you offered to send me literature on the topic. I have reviewed the two summaries you forwarded, compiled by a social scientist at the University of Pennsylvania, which indicate her view that exposure to extreme forms of pornography can teach behaviors, including the sexual exploitation of children. It appears there is a great deal of literature on the subject, and without a comprehensive examination of the research, I am hesitant to come to any firm conclusions on the science.

I agree that dissemination of obscenity violates federal law and must be prosecuted, among other reasons, because of the potential effect such violations of law have on both parents and minor children. As a father now of two children, I believe strongly that our children ought to be protected from predators, and if confirmed as the Associate Attorney General would work to the extent possible to make sure the Department of Justice vigorously enforces the appropriate laws.